

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6640

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T KINSHASA 10587

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR PINS ASEC CG AO

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH FLEC LEADER

REF: A) STATE 258936 (NOTAL) B) KINSHASA 10066

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MET NOVEMBER 4 WITH PRESIDENT NZITA OF FLEC (FRONT FOR LIBERATION OF THE ENCLAVE OF CABINDA), WHO MADE PITCH FOR US UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. AMBASSADOR CONVEYED POINTS CONTAINED IN REFTEL A, EMPHASIZING THAT PERIODIC FLEC THREATS TO SABOTAGE GULF/CABINDA COULD ONLY JEOPARDIZE CONTINUATION OF PRESENT LIMITED LEVEL OF US-CABINDAN COOPERATION. NZITA DID NOT ARGUE THE POINT, CONCENTRATING INSTEAD ON TRYING TO GET REIMBURSEMENT FOR FUNDS FLEC HAD ALLEGEDLY SPENT AIDING CABINDAN REFUGEES. WHILE NOTING US INTENDED TO PURSUE EFFORTS TO ALLEVIATE REFUGEE PLIGHT, AMBASSADOR MADE CLEAR THAT SUCH HELP COULD NOT EXTEND BEYOND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND COULD NOT BE CHANNELED THROUGH A POLITICAL ORGANIZATION SUCH AS FLEC. END SUMMARY.

2. NZITA WAS ACCOMPANIED BY FLEC "MINISTER" OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS YUNBA-DI-TSHIBUKA AND BY FLEC OFFICIAL MELO. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED HE WAS RECEIVING THEM IN VIEW OF
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IMPOSSIBILITY OF WASHINGTON OFFICIALS TO DO SO AND IN CONTEXT OF GENERAL US POLICY OF BEING READY TO LISTEN TO ALL VIEWS ON ANY GIVEN ISSUE. AS EXPECTED, NZITA PROFESSED FLEC'S COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVE CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE AT ALL COSTS AND BY WHATEVER MEANS, AND APPEALED FOR US UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF FLEC'S OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM. AMBASSADOR SAID US CANNOT PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS AND THAT IN ANY CASE CONGRESSIONAL

PROHIBITIONS VIS-A-VIS ANGOLA WOULD MAKE AID TO FLEC IMPOSSIBLE.

3. AMBASSADOR REITERATED US HUMANITARIAN INTEREST IN ALLEVIATING PLIGHT OF CABINDAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE. HE REVIEWED ASSISTANCE USG HAS BEEN PROVIDING THROUGH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND THROUGH UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR). NZITA ACKNOWLEDGED US HELP FOR REFUGEES WAS BADLY NEEDED AND APPRECIATED BY CABINDANS.

4. TURNING TO THE PERIODIC THREATS FROM FLEC LEADERS TO SABOTAGE GULF FACILITIES IN CABINDA, AMBASSADOR UNDERScoreD FACT THAT FLEC COULD ONLY LOSE FROM SUCH ACTIONS. REFERRING TO US WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH AND LISTEN TO FLEC REPRESENTATIVES, AMBASSADOR ASKED NZITA HOW HE COULD EXPECT EVEN THIS LIMITED DEGREE OF COOPERATION TO CONTINUE IF FLEC REPEATS SUCH THREATS. AMBASSADOR ALSO NOTED THAT FLEC THREATS COULD EVEN COMPLICATE US EFFORTS TO GO ON HELPING CABINDAN REFUGEES.

5. NZITA CLAIMED FLEC DID NOT WISH TO HARM US PROPERTY OR LIVES PER SE; RATHER IT WAS A QUESTION OF GULF'S INSTALLATIONS INEVITABLY BEING VULNERABLE TO DAMAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF FLEC'S OVER-ALL EFFORT TO LIBERATE CABINDA. HE WENT ON TO CLAIM THAT PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAD ASKED FLEC TO AT LEAST EMPORARILY DISCONTINUE ITS ARMED STRUGGLE AND FOCUS INSTEAD ON DIPLOMATIC MEANS OF ACHIEVING CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE. HENCY NZITA'S CALL ON AMBASSADOR CUTLER AND HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO EUROPE (REFTEL B) WERE TO BE VIEWED IN THIS CONTEXT. THE AMBASSADOR REITERATED THAT WHILE US INTENDED TO GO
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ON PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN AID FOR REFUGEES, THERE COULD BE NO THOUGHT OF OUR ASSISTING FLEC DIPLOMATICALLY OR IN ANY OTHER WAY.

6. APPARENTLY AS A FALLBACK, NZITA THEN SOUGHT REIMBURSEMENT FOR FUNDS FLEC HAD ALLEGEDLY SPENT TO AID CABINDAN REFUGEES. YUMBA-DI-TSHIBUKA SHOWED THE AMBASSADOR A NUMBER OF RECEIPTS FOR FOODSTUFFS, MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND MEDICAL TREATMENTS WHICH HE SAID FLEC HAD DISBURSED ON BEHALF OF THE CABINDAN REFUGEES. NZITA SUGGESTED THAT EITHER THE USG OR THE GULF OIL COMPANY SHOULD COVER THESE EXPENDITURES. AMBASSADOR MADE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THE US REIMBURSING FLEC OR USING FLEC TO DISTRIBUTE REFUGEE AID; NOR WOULD IT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE USG TO ENCOURAGE GULF TO DO SO.

7. THE MEETING ENDED WITH NZITA STATING HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE EXPLANATION OF US POSITIONS WHICH WE HAD GIVEN HIM. THE AMBASSADOR REITERATED THE WILLINGNESS OF MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF TO MEET OCCASIONALLY WITH FLEC REPRESENTATIVES, HEAR THEM OUT, AND DISCUSS PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE PLIGHT OF THE REFUGEES.

8. COMMENT: MEETING WAS FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT AND NZITA SEEMED GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH ARRANGEMENTS MADE TO SEE AMBASSADOR IN LIEU OF WASHINGTON OFFICIALS. WE BELIEVE HE UNDERSTOOD CLEARLY

OUR MESSAGE CONCERNING THE INADMISSIBILITY OF THREATS TO GULF/
CABINDA, AND HE DID NOT TAKE OCCASION TO ISSUE NEW WARNINGS.
WHILE THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT FLEC MAY NOT TRY TO USE THIS LEVER
AGAIN, THEY MAY NOW HAVE BETTER REALIZATION OF ITS LIMITED VALUE.
NZITA.S REMARKS ABOUT PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAVING ORDERED A CESSATION
OF HOSTILITIES IN CABINDA WERE OF INTEREST. HOWEVER, WE SUSPECT
THAT ANY DIMINUTION IN FLEC GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES CAN BE ATTRI-
BUTED AS MUCH TO SQUABBLES AMONG THE VARIOUS FLEC FACTIONS AS TO

ANY "ORDERS" FROM MOBUTU.
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